

Western Ecological Research Center <http://www.werc.usgs.gov>

Piedras Blancas Field Station

The remote central coast of California, midway between San Francisco and Los Angeles, is home to relatively healthy populations of wildlife species that have declined or disappeared in other parts of the state. It offers an excellent location for scientists to conduct research on issues related to the ecology and management of sensitive coastal and marine species.

The Piedras Blancas Field Station is located at a U.S. Coast Guard lighthouse northwest of San Simeon. Research encompass distribution, taxonomy, life history, population status, habitat relationships, and behavioral ecology of fishes, frogs, turtles, and snakes. Field methods include direct observation, inventory, survey, capture, and radiotracking techniques. Experimental studies are used to explain ecological relationships and determine the causes behind species declines.

Station scientists provide technical assistance to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Defense, California Department of Transportation, and local government on issues related to the sensitive species and management of public lands. In addition, scientists at Piedras Blancas Field Station, in cooperation with foreign scientists, are participating in studies and management programs for reptiles and amphibians in other countries, including Mexico and Paraguay.

Current work includes assessing how the replacement of a state highway bridge may affect several aquatic vertebrates, including the federally threatened California red-legged frog.



B. Hatfield

Science Expertise

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- Biology and systematics of reptiles and amphibians
- Endangered species biology
- Tropical biology

For more information, contact:

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